



ACTIVISM *through*
ZINES



Chella: I've used zines as activism for a long time now, and it all started with The 24 Hour Zine Thing. After making Chart Your Cycle, I used zines to deconstruct

representations of menstruation in the media in Adventures in Menstruating, share Sheffield zine history in NMX 26, advocate for libraries in Low Tech Library, support SAYiT (an LGBT Youth charity) with homophobia in religion, and engage the public in space exploration in It's Not You, I Just Need Space. I've also had the pleasure of participating in collaborative zine projects, including Shape and Situate by Melanie Maddison and Hair Today...! Hair Tomorrow...!? By Ladyfest Sheffield, touring the Mobile Menstrual Zine Library, and leading zine-in-a-day workshops for activist communities. Whether you're handing out a zine at a demo, talking back to corporations, chronicling a movement or a moment in time, or sharing your personal lived experience, citizen journalism is powerful.



Lee: I teach about radical sex-positivity. Zines are both about personal exploration and growth, and also about community (coming together around zines, learning and growing together), so I think zines are a great place to help shift sex cultures toward consent and respect!



Noemi: Many of the reviews of my zine described it as political. I was simply telling the stories from the perspective of a Chicana single mom living poor in South Texas. The zines I did where I gave a platform to women of colour survivors of domestic & sexual violence - those I consider the best zines I was involved in.



Erin: I write about being disabled in my zines because I want others to know that the lives of disabled people are worth something, and we need the same rights and access as able-bodied/neurotypical individuals.



Cara: LaDIYfest Sheffield made a collaborative zine compiling experiences of people's relationships with their body hair. It was inspiring. Encouraging Body hair rules!



Sarah: I've done pages in comp zines - one on body hair and one on feminism. It was fun! I hope people got something out of it.



Fliss: I've used zines to highlight library cuts and closures, to report on library campaigns, and to illustrate the worth of libraries for society.



Steve: I'm getting ready to do a zine about supporting local small businesses.



Jacob: I helped organize the Leeds Uni occupation of the Michael Sadler Building in 2010 following mass student protests against a tripling of fees and eradication of EMA. On the first day, some other feminists of the collective created a zine to express some early feelings and thoughts about it. The moments when the occupation was forming placed a question mark over who was running the building we came to occupy and how they would run it. The activity of zinemaking put a similar question mark over printed media



Rosy: Chella's zine making workshop blossomed into the kick-ass 'You Mean A Woman Can Open It?' zine. We did the Occupation zine a

few weeks later precisely because that skills-sharing happened. For anyone thinking of chronicling their activism in zine form, throw your thoughts out of your head, on to the page - to the rest of the world.



Vera: I set up the Brautigan Book Club in response to cult Beat writer & counterculture icon Richard Brautigan, to use the man and his work as a starting point. What emerged is that non-writers, non-artists, non-makers suddenly found that, over the year, they gained confidence and started creating. The end of year zine was a celebration of their ongoing and newfound voices. For me, this is a very potent kind of activism. Planting the seed inside people and them going on to live their lives in a different and positive way.



Charlotte: I created Queer Zine Fest London, because I want to facilitate a space where queer DIY publishing rules!



Sam: I tell short stories through Sloucher Zine that share marginalised perspectives because life frustrates me so much that making up stories, both dramatic and funny, feels like the catharsis I need. Zines are like open mic nights - you've got the soapbox for yourself. Through them I've achieved some catharsis about life's vicissitudes (bad jobs, break ups, frustration, depression). Give it a shot!



Cath: I edit a compzine called Pandora Press which encourages Swansea women to share their stories and their voices in a supportive and nurturing environment. I also make feminist mini zines (e.g. "Reasons to be a feminist") and leave them inside the pages of glossy magazines for buyers to discover! I use zines for activism because they're easy and cheap to make and distribute; a fun, visceral way to spread an important message!

I asked my friends if they'd ever used zines in their activism, and illustrated their responses. Since this was a 24 hour zine (which, okay, has technically bent the rules a bit now because I'm looking at the clock and let's just say some time has passed), I could only include the friends that have gotten back to me in the time it took to make this. There are way more examples out there - this is just a taster. Big thanks to my pals, and to Ladyfest Leeds for inviting me to talk about arts and activism. This zine was made for the 24 Hour Zine Thing 2013!

xChella

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